

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL
CENTER FOR LOWELL HISTORY
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

**THE WORKING PEOPLE OF LOWELL
LOWELL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
MARY BLEWETT/MARTHA MAYO**

INFORMANT: MARIO ESPINOSA

INTERVIEWER: PAUL PAGE

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P = PAUL

M = MARIO

Tape 86.21

P: We are here today at Mario Espinosa's Insurance agency. I am interviewing Mario Espinosa, and I'll be asking you questions about your life here in Lowell, and your past, some things about your past. So could you tell me something about your parents? Were they the first people to come in to Lowell?

M: No. My parents didn't come to Lowell. My parents came from Mexico to Arizona, Texas, and New Mexico in the 1940's. And that's when I was born in '49, in Arizona. They were working in the fields that they call them over there.

P: You mean like the cotton ... agriculture?

M: Yes, in the farms, in the farms in Arizona, in Texas, and New Mexico. In the mid '50's they went back to Mexico, and obviously we went back with them. That's where I grew up, in Mexico. Later I came back in 1969, after I got finished junior high in Mexico.

P: So where did your parents come from in Mexico?

M: Northeast of Mexico, Zacatecas State, It is about twelve hours drive from El Paso, Texas.

P: How do you spell that? Just [unclear].

M: Z-a-c-a-t-e-c-a-s

P: Okay. So you went to school most of your life in Mexico.

M: Yes, I finished junior high. And then from Arizona I lived in Flagstaff, Arizona working for the University, Northern Eastern Arizona University. Then I moved to Los Angeles area in California and I finished high school there. I was attending the adult community school.

P: What brought you to Lowell?

M: My wife is Greek. She was born in Greece, and she moved to the United States in 1972, and to California in 1974. And we met in '77, and we got married in 1980. Her family lived here, and mine lived there. And [unclear]. So we moved here in 1980.

P: Why Lowell?

M: Why Lowell? Her family and her move from Greece to Lowell in 1972. And when she moved to California, her only brother and mother stayed here. And since she didn't have any family in California, after we got married she said, "Why don't we try it over there?" And I didn't have a very good job over there in Los Angeles. So I said, "Let's give it a try." And we moved and I found, we found a job as a bilingual editor and translator. I have always been bilingual, and I studied the two languages. So for the last twelve years that's what I've been doing, translating and editing, and you know, interpreting the two languages. I immediately found a job that was paying almost double of what I was making in California. Of course the cost of living in Massachusetts is higher, but you know, that was quite a difference. And I did that from 1980 to 1983, in Reading (P: Oh yah) in a Language Center.

P: Then you came to Lowell after that?

M: Then, well in 1981 we bought a condominium in Dracut. In 1983 we sold it and moved to Lowell. And at that time I started working for Prudential Insurance Company as a sales rep. So actually we lived in this area since 1981.

P: When did you finally set up your own business here?

M: After three years of experience in sales of insurance, and other financial services, I get enough training and professional training to start my own business in this field. It's tough, very tough, but it's worth it. I feel that at the end of the second year we will be in very good shape.

P: Oh, this is only the first year?

M: I've been in the insurance business for the past three and a half years, and I opened my business in December of 1985. I am still working for the Prudential Insurance Company, and doing my own insurance services of my own.

P: What kind of groups, not specific clientele, but what groups do you find coming to you?

M: At the beginning of my insurance career was easier to relate, it was easier to relate to, maybe because of the contrasts of cultures, and language, and looks with the Anglo-Saxon community and the Greek community, since my wife belongs to the Greek community. It was easier for me to start my business there. Most of my clientele was Anglo-Saxon and Greek. By nature and by culture the Hispanics and other ethnic groups are not as conscientious about insurance, other than auto insurance, as the other groups, as the other community groups. So after two years I realized that there was a big market in the minority groups for insurance. Perhaps not life insurance, and retirement plans, and IRA's and things like that, but auto insurance and essential insurance needs that everybody must satisfy. That's what prompted me to start my own business, because car insurance everybody needs, and must have. And since the Hispanic community could not be willing to buy life insurance, but car insurance. And there was no Hispanic insurance agency in the area. I feel that I would be providing an essential service of bilingual insurance and financial services. I also hired a Cambodian person, who is contacting all the Cambodian community, and between the two groups I think we can fill that void in this market.

P: So do you find (--) So you're trying to broaden your group of clientele?

M: Definitely. We started with the Anglo-Saxons, as I said, and then with the Greeks, and now with the Hispanics and the Southeast Asians.

P: How does your wife fit into the Greek community here in Lowell now?

M: Yes, she has been (--) You know she lived here for a few years prior to moving to California. We belong to the Greek Orthodox Church, where we got married in her religion.

P: But what does that mean?

M: And we baptized our child there. So that means that for our son to be recognized in the Greek culture, or Greek nationality, he must be baptized in the Greek Orthodox Church. So that means that broadens our scope of business. She speaks the language. So any person that comes into our office that doesn't speak good English, but better Greek than English, my wife is able to assist the person, as well as my assistant helps the Southeast Asians, and I personally help the Anglo clientele, plus the Hispanic clientele.

P: What happens (--) Were you, you aren't originally Greek Orthodox though?

M: I am not converted. I am Catholic, Roman Catholic. But our marriage could not have been recognized if we hadn't done it in the Greek Church. By not being recognized, our children could not have been able to be baptized in the Greek Orthodox faith.

P: Does that mean you are now going to Orthodox services?

M: Yes I do. Nowadays I believe that no matter what religion you belong to, I have uncles in California who belong to the Baptist, or to the Evangelist. And I go to one church as well as the other without any reservations.

P: Do you (--) Are you involved in any Greek social organizations, social clubs or?

M: Not social clubs, but more religious groups. I am a member of the board of the Greek Orthodox Assumption of the Virgin Mary Church. I am a member of other community service groups and agencies in Lowell such as, UNITAS, or the CBA (Coalition for a Better Acre), and now we are embarking on forming a Hispanic association in Lowell.

P: Well isn't there a Spanish American Center on Gorham Street?

M: Yes, but nobody belongs to it, and there's no service that provides other than renting the downstairs hall for events. Actually only the softball league takes advantage of it. There's no group. There's no organization that will represent the Hispanic nationalities in this area. And there must be over 10,000 Hispanics.

P: In Lowell

M: In Lowell, just in Lowell. So that's what we are trying to form now, an association that will represent us culturally, socially, politically, and in the sports environment as too.

P: Do you feel that there's a, that the Hispanics are, I don't know what the right word is, misrepresented, or mistreated, or [unclear]?

M: I don't know if we are mistreated, I think we are fragmented. We're not united.

P: You mean like now there are many different groups that makes up the Hispanic (--)

M: Nationalities.

P: How do you expect to unite so many different [unclear]?

M: Well I have been involved in community service for the past three years, or two years I should say. And in my business I am able to contact many different nationalities and people from all walks of life, and different nationalities, not only Hispanics. I have noticed a very general adverse feeling against Hispanic groups in particular, and in my type of business I must provide good service regardless of color or race. And I feel that heartedly. So.

P: Do you think (--) Do you feel that there's conflict with (--) This is the question I have, if there's conflict between the different Hispanic groups? Because in my mind, and in many people's mind, I think they group Hispanics together. A lot of times, a lot of times when the word Hispanic comes in, I think people immediately think of Puerto

Ricans, rather than the other groups. So in a sense then are, you know, are there any sort of conflicts you find between Columbians, and Mexicans, and Dominicans, and (--)

M: No, I don't see the conflict between us. I see some groups they don't like to be labeled Hispanics. They would like probably to be labeled Latin Americans, or any other term but Hispanic. It doesn't matter if we are Hispanics, or a particular nationality. I think what is important is (--) Well let me go back a little bit. I think many people believe that Hispanics are Puerto Ricans. So they relate them, because most of the Hispanics in the Lowell area are Puerto Ricans, most of them. I still think up to now, most of them are Puerto Ricans, but (--) And the Puerto Ricans probably feel a little, with more rights than the rest of the Hispanics, because they are considered American citizens; whether or not the other Hispanic nationalities have become citizens or not, regardless of that. But it doesn't matter what nationality we belong to. If we are called Latin Americans, we are Hispanics from the Latin American country, including the Caribbean. I believe that the if we're called Hispanic, that includes some Spaniards, you know, some Hispanics from Spain. And I think whether we like the term or not, I think Hispanic is more broad. I think it gives more of a proper definition to all the nationalities than being called Latin American. We don't like to exclude anybody, especially when we are trying to form an association. And to answer your previous question, how do we try, how are we going to accomplish this unification? We have been contacting people from different nationalities, Columbians, Caribbean's, Dominicans, Puerto Ricans.

P: Major people in their communities, you know what I mean, influential?

M: Both, influential and not; influential in the sense of known in the community, and influential in the sense that they are professionals.

P: Could you tell me some of their names, or would you rather not?

M: Well you know already many public figures in the community service environment such as Dahlia Calvo from UNITAS, and Morales from the Coalition for a Better Acre, formerly from the Coalition for a Better Acre. We have two or three people that have been in the religion, in the religious environment, but they are involved in the community services situations. We have Elkin Montoya from Columbia, who has been involved in tenants advocacy and housing, and Coalition for a Better Acres too. And we have two doctors from two different hospitals in this area. About six people from Wang, some professionals some not; some people from two or three different banks, and a few business owners. So I think that we are getting there. It's just a matter of time.

P: By any chance, I know it's early, but do you have any projects in mind? Projects, you know, let's say you want to improve the political participation of Hispanic people. You might try a registration drive if they are not already registered.

M: That is something the Coalition and UNITAS have been doing for the past two or three years. When there is, for example, a Lucy Larcom Festival, like the one coming up, (P: Like this Saturday, yah) UNITAS and [unclear] Morales from the CBA work

together, and I have [unclear] to that, to register those that haven't done so. The CBA and [unclear] Morales, and other people have been working with the community in that sense, encouraging them in to register. And also, the Hispanic association with them hoping, or we hoping to form, is not primarily politically motivated or is not going to be for the purpose of electing somebody into office. Indirectly we will encourage them to get registered.

P: Because if the population is about 12,000 in the city, and the total city population is around 90,000, yet you have no one. I can't think of anyone in City Hall who is any you know, way up, you know, either councilor, or mayor councilor. (M: Correct) Even the Cambodians, I mean there's another, there's another seven, or eight thousand.

M: Exactly. I believe it is going to take us a couple of years for the Hispanics and probably the Cambodians to have representation.

P: Are you satisfied with the cultural aspects of, you know, the cultural presentations? Does that help the city if people in Lowell understand the Hispanic people?

M: What presentations?

P: When I say presentations, I mean festivals more, like the Southeast Asian's this week, and the Spanish, the Hispanics this Saturday. (M: Saturday in the Lucy Larcom Festival?) Yah, because there is a lot of misunderstanding I think, that the white people have concerning Hispanics. Ideas like they're all on welfare, they're here to take what we've earned and go back to their country and screw. [Chuckles]

M: That's a misconception. The Puerto Ricans, as I said, is the largest ethnic, Hispanic group in the area, and way over 50% are working. There is no comparison of the total of Hispanics on welfare, and the total of other groups on welfare. The Hispanics is a minority in that sense, higher minority in that sense. As far as going back to a country, well it is true that the Puerto Ricans can come and go, because they are citizens and have some family over there. But it doesn't matter. There are many groups who come and go whatever they please, whether they are transient or not, they come and work and they can go wherever they please. I believe that the majority are working and contributing as consumers and as citizens to this country. That is the majority and I believe that's all that counts.

P: So are you (--) Have you experienced some of these attitudes yourself living here in Lowell? I know that you haven't lived here long, but I'm still, I'm impressed by (--)

M: Yes, many people consider Hispanics as a negative group.

P: Well, you know, just to put, maybe to put this in context, you should someday ask your wife how the Greeks were (--) I don't know if she knows, but when the Greeks first came to Lowell, they were also looked down upon once.

M: Yes, and they still come and go just like any other groups. The Anglos don't go to any other country, because they don't have any other country, but they move from one state to another, and in large groups. We're talking about thousands, now that the Hispanics are one of the newest groups in this area, and maybe that's why they notice it more. I believe that the Lucy Larcom has helped to change that in the sense, that feeling in a sense, because they see the Hispanics as participants in the community. And the Puerto Rican Festival which is, has been organizing the festivals for several years, a couple of days, I think is in August, has been a way of meeting at least once a year for the Puerto Ricans and other Hispanic groups participate in the festival too. So now all we need is an association that will unite those nationalities, and change if we can the way other people perceive us.

P: Do you think, is there a large Mexican group here in Lowell?

M: To tell you the truth, I don't know how many Mexicans there are. I've met three. I've heard there are more than three, but. Many years ago I got over the bad feeling of, "Oh you're Mexican," "Oh, you're Puerto Rican," "Oh, you're Columbian or Argentineans." I worked in California for ten years, and went to school in California. And that's one of the places where you really find not only all the Hispanic nationalities, but all of the nationalities of the world. And I worked with them, with many nationalities. So you see that those differentiations are unnecessary, are negligible once you work with everybody. It doesn't matter what nationality they belong too.

P: But here you are in a city that almost prides itself in emphasizing the distinctions between groups.

M: I am the only Hispanic working for Prudential Insurance Company. And I have been in the insurance business for the past three and a half years, and I am one of the top producers of an office. Out of sixty people I am number eight, number seven, number six. It doesn't really affect me how they see us. They can joke around and say, "Oh, he's Hispanic," "Oh he's Mexican," "Oh he's Puerto Rican." I'm called Puerto Rican many times. What difference does it make? I have proved myself.

P: Have you ever talked about some of this with your wife? I would think that in the Greek community there are some different attitudes about the same sense of identity, or attachments.

M: Yes, there are some groups that are nationalistic, you know. The Greeks tend to stay within the Greek community and attain success through that identification. There are many others who have married Irish and Hispanic people. I know that personally. I have met many that have married Hispanics. And Irish of course they've been marrying with each other for many, many decades. My wife sometimes feels the label of, "Oh, your son is Hispanic." She would probably, you know, wouldn't like to have her son labeled Hispanic, but there's a misconception that every person feels as that person is growing up, whether it is a man or a woman, regardless of age, as they are growing up, are

maturing. In this type of environment they realize that the difference doesn't make much difference if you are a difference of nationality.

Tape I, Side A ends

Tape I, Side B begins

M: And the service that you are providing, quote, "you are a good person, contributing, sensitive and sensible to other person's needs," they realize that nationalities don't matter much. On the other hand, each nationality is proud, and should be proud of its background, its culture, and its habits, the way we grow up. For example, the Hispanics listening to Mariachi music, to the Indian dances. The way we grow up, you know, that's something to be proud of as part of the culture, but on the other hand you are proud of what you are today, and you are proud of sharing that with other people that are ignorant of that, ignorant of that culture, ignorant of that way of life.

P: Now I have to ask this question. I can't resist. [Unclear] I'm just wondering now, in your own, how can I put it? What kinds of, let's say, I can use it this way. What kinds of foods and customs do you think you follow more of in your family?

M: We (--)

P: Like when I say, the reason I'll say it like that is, Greeks historically have their own kind of food that they [unclear].

M: Yes, but they don't eat it every day, do they?

P: No, that's why it's a difficult question to ask without seeming prejudiced.

M: Yes, people, most people have a misconception of, if you are from a certain country, if you are Greek you eat Tiropita every day, or Cheese Pie, or Spinach Pie, or [Phasolia] that they call, that is a bean soup. It is a misconception. We eat just like anybody else. People think that I eat tacos everyday. People think that in Mexico people eat tacos everyday. Tacos in Mexico, and enchiladas are like hamburgers in the United States. Fast food, that's what it is. Perhaps an American family, an Anglo family eats hamburgers once a week. It is exactly the same as a Mexican family eats in Mexico, maybe tacos once a week, or every other week. Also the main ingredient which is the bread, the corn bread, the tortilla they eat everyday; just like the American here eats the white bread, the sliced bread everyday, or the hamburger buns they eat here mostly everyday, or the English muffins; same over there. So to answer your question directly, here in our home we have you know, fish or hamburgers, or corn tortillas, or flour tortillas, or bean soup Greek style, or bean soup Mexican style. Foods are I think international nowadays. Each family has been exposed to foods of other dishes of other countries. If they happen to like it, they happen to eat more often than others; just like

many American families in the Southwest, and in the West, they eat more tacos than you or I here. They are more exposed to it, and it happens to be a delicious meal.

P: What kind of background do you have? Are you, when you say Mexican, are you also Indian?

M: Yes, my grandmother, my maternal, paternal grandmother was pure Indian.

P: What group?

M: I don't know. There are hundreds in Mexico. Obviously in history we just know the main ones, Aztecs, Mayas, and Baltics, but there are many groups just like in the United States. There must be dozens of Indian groups. In Mexico, the same. I could not know what group she belonged to, but she was strong-willed, she was the matriarch of the family. Even after my parents were forty, fifty years old, the mother, that grandmother was still calling the shots in many ways.

P: What other, some of your other grandparent's (--)

M: My paternal grandfather was, I don't know if he was born in Spain, or his father or mother, but he had bluish eyes, light skin. And I have a sister that is you know, white, you know, very fair skin. That's one thing with Latin American groups, they mixed with Spaniards. In certain regions like in the Caribbean side, they were mixed with black people, because all the ships and slavery you know, on the port side. Same with other Latin American countries. Columbia, on the shores and the coasts, they were mixed with blacks also. Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, and other areas exposed to the slavery trade, or slave trade, they were mixed with blacks. But most regions of Mexico and Latin American countries, they were mixed with Spaniards mainly.

P: You had mentioned before that you were involved with the Coalition for a Better Acre.

M: I am a member of the Board, yes.

P: Do you live in that area of the city?

M: Yes I live in the Acre.

P: What do you think, what are some of the problems facing the Acre? Why is it you know, run down or having difficulties?

M: Well it is clearly a rundown area. Difficulties are being felt because of the other groups that used to inhabit that area now have diminished, and moved to other neighborhoods. I don't know the history of Lowell. You probably know it better than I do, but I think that the French were the first that populated that area, and then the Greek. I don't know if it is in that order.

P: No, it's actually (--) Well it doesn't matter. There were a succession of groups going through the area.

M: The last I suppose were the French and the Greeks

P: And the Irish. (M: Okay, and the Irish) See originally, just a brief (--) Originally the, Kirk Boott who lived around the 1840's and 1850's, who was one of the fathers, you know, founding fathers of the city in a sense, he as a matter of fact, Lowell was going to be called either Derby, which was where Kirk Boott came from in England, or it was going to be called Lowell after you know, one of the Lowell's in Boston. And he was attached to Lowell. Well he was a result of part of the original mill owners. And eventually anyway, the Lowell faction won. So Lowell was called Lowell. Well, Boott was having such a hard time with the Irish, they were so unruly and drinking, and partying, well dancing, partying and being obnoxious.

M: Are you saying that the Irish like to drink? [Laughs]

P: Well this is supposed to be the reputation they developed. Boott decided to provide some stability in their community by giving them an acre of land that was called the Acre, in and around Broadway and the rest, and then also, so that they could build a church for one thing, and then build little houses. And that's how, actually the first group were the Irish. The French actually moved into a different area of the city. I don't ever think there were many French in the Acre. After the Irish came the Greeks. And then after the Greeks I guess, the Spanish, well the Hispanics moved in.

M: I believe they have been here for twenty years or so, the Hispanics, the first Hispanics that moved to this area.

P: Well I found out recently that in 1956 there were four Hispanic families. That was it. So within the past twenty or thirty years, since in '65 and '66 there was a great migration from Puerto Rico.

M: And Cubans I suppose.

P: Cubans too, from the Islands, yah. So I cut you off though, going on my soapbox. I like the history of the Acre. That's why (--)

M: Yah, well going back to your question, well yes, it is a run down place, area, and the CBA has been working to mitigate the housing shortage and facelift old tenant buildings, and trying to provide some affordable housing to prospective homebuyers. He's not Hispanic, a minority. He doesn't have to be a minority. He can be a low income person. So they're not discriminating either. Now supposedly, or apparently, the majority of the population is Hispanic. I don't know if he was Hispanic, or suppose he is Hispanic, but there are many Southeast Asians in that area now. There's still a lot of Greeks in that area. So I don't know who is the majority. But definitely the majority of the poverty level families are Hispanic and Southeast Asian. We would like to see

that changed through affordable housing, community service, community involvement and political participation, etc., etc.

P: Now who owns a lot of the buildings that you find in the Acre?

M: I don't know.

P: Well I'm just wondering, because is it a few major land owners or many private groups.

M: I think the CBA staff will be more able to answer your question. I know that there are four or five big Greek landlords, but I wouldn't be able to tell you how many properties they own, but the CBA will.

P: Now a lot of the buildings look like they've been ignored; not only by the people who own it, but by the city itself.

M: True. I think the city should participate more openly in refurbishing that area. I think that have participated to a certain extent now that the CBA is involved and representing the Acre in a sense. I believe that the city will participate, have more participation if we were a bigger organization, or if we had another organization, or if we had more political clout. I don't know the exact formula, but every little bit will help.

P: You know the Ethnic Covenant has been involved with some (--) The Ethnic Covenant I guess, is a coalition of seven churches. What do you think of their efforts to improve housing?

M: Well their efforts are well-intended. They're foreseeing having some investors in groups, particularly the Catholic Church, and developing not only twenty or thirty houses, or apartments, or buildings, but hundreds of houses or coop's, and not only in the Acre, but they, you know, they are, their intentions are to provide affordable housing in the Merrimack Valley. So the hundreds of units will probably be reduced to a few thousand in every town, or a particular neighbor of a town. I would like to see them succeed in, definitely.

P: What are some of the other, I'm just curious about what are some of the other projects that the Coalition has in mind for the Acre?

M: Such as?

P: Well another way to ask it is, just what is the scope of the projects or activities that the Coalition is involved with?

M: I think they will be in a better position to answer that. As a board member I know that they have almost finished the development of twenty or thirty plaza plus houses,

single and two-family, for low income people, or the lower bracket of the middle income people. Now they are planning to, well they have purchased other three or four big buildings that they will be refurbishing and rehabilitating. I don't know if they plan to rent, or offer them as coops to low-income people or minorities. Also, they are planning to form a small Minority Business Association regardless of nationalities, but minorities. I personally had suggested a few months ago, to offer community services to areas other than the Acre. That suggestion was not well received, mainly because they want to go on a slow, but safe, pace. I would like to see the CBA either change the name or not, whether they change the name or not, to be involved in all areas of Lowell, not only the Acre. That's my personal opinion.

P: What kind of needs do you think aren't being met in other areas?

M: In other areas?

P: In other words, what's your idea for suggesting this?

M: Well there are other areas that need rehabilitation. There are areas that slum landlords, you know, have neglected the properties for a long time. And there are other areas where minorities don't have the essential services that other neighborhoods have, such as you know, garbage pick up and even the streets, the pavement. You go to the acre and you see those streets that look like the worst area of Mexico City.

P: After the earthquake.

M: After the earthquake, right.

P: So you're sending your children (--) Where? You have one child? Where has he been going to school?

M: He is going to the nursery now, but you know, nursery school. And my wife and I would like to see him going to the Greek school just to master the Greek language. He was not accepted by the way for kindergarten for September at the Greek school. He was turned down. Reasons are apparently immaturity at his age. Whether it is true, or not, so discrimination or not, time will tell. And for now I would like to think it is immaturity.

P: Have you been able to teach him Spanish?

M: He understands more than he speaks. Once he grows up a little more, we can send him to Mexico to learn the language correctly. He went to Greece last year with my wife for the summer. So he came back speaking only Greek. Now he speaks only English, but it doesn't matter, he's exposed to the three languages. And as I said, I would like to see him go to Greek school, if not this year, hopefully next year, just to learn the language. Not for any other reason. Of course that is not the only way he can learn the language, but that will be the most convenient.

P: What do you find yourselves, your family doing for recreation as a group?

M: We go to Greek festivals, festivals, to Greek Church events. Whenever there is a Hispanic event, we attend it. Whenever there is a Hispanic group, or a folkloric group coming to town, or Boston, or Andover, or any other area, we go. We attend it. Other than that, we don't have much time to entertain ourselves, mainly because of the business. You know, we get together with Greek families, and we get together with some Hispanic families. As I said, we haven't developed deep relationships with Hispanic in the area, because we haven't been exposed to them for a long time. But you know, I do have many acquaintances and friends that I have developed in the past year that are Hispanic. That is one of the reasons why I want to see a group of Hispanics form the Hispanic Association, because there is no group, there's no place, where the Hispanic community can get together and learn the culture, preserve the culture, enjoy each other in events that are common of Hispanics. So there are three main reasons why the association will be successful and implemented. One will be the cultural situation, another one will be the sports, and another one will be the social events that we will be organizing.

P: What do you mean by sports events?

M: Well, there is a softball league already in Lowell. It has 4 teams that are Hispanic. There is one that is informally a soccer team, and then some basketball. We would like to see those groups organized. The softball league is already organized, but the others we would like to see them organized and participate with the other communities, and sponsor and expose the younger generations to sports that are traditional of Hispanics; like soccer, and similar sports; on the social side, to have places, and reasons, and motives to meet the other Hispanic groups; and on the cultural side, to promote and preserve our traditions.

P: You know the Park Service is creating an exhibit on the ethnic history of Lowell. Do you think, are there any things that you would like to see as a part of this exhibit by the Park?

M: I don't think, I don't know how well or not they are promoting this event. I would like to see them have more participation from the Hispanic community. Unfortunately, not having a group, or an organization representative of the Hispanics, those events will be limited, you know. Because where can you get the information? Just through UNITAS, and whom else? Not even from the Puerto Rican groups, because you don't know many of them. I don't think they got in touch with them. So that's very limited; but it could not hurt.

P: Would you know of anyone who has like little, little gifts or things that they brought over with them from their home countries? Like one of the things they're interested in finding are articles that are you know, important to people as reminders of their past.

M: Well everybody has knick-knacks from the country. I know we have some, but we displayed some last year at the Lucy Larcom Festival, where the rangers are, the Park Rangers. We displayed some at the Park there. You know, it cannot hurt to have those things displayed, but you know, that's a way of (--)

P: Well what I am getting at is, do, would you know of anyone who would have these sorts of things that they'd be willing to donate to, to the Park Service so they could put up?

M: I don't know anybody who will donate them. I don't think I would like to donate what I have. I think the best way for me to show the other groups my culture is not by letting the City of Lowell show the two or three knickknacks that I brought with me from Mexico on my last trip. I think we want more than that.

P: Well that's just one of the, you know. (M: Ways of) Showing people what it's like.

M: Yes

P: In Mexico I realize that it's not quite as, sometimes it's not, it's more like tourist kind of things. In some cases, you will have people who came over from Scandinavia who have costumes that they used to use, you know, that sort of stuff.

M: Exactly. Yes, as I said, that can only help. But no, I don't know anybody who will be willing to donate things to the city of Lowell.

P: Do you know of other people who would be willing to be interviewed like this, who might be, you know, have insight?

M: I don't know if they will be willing to be interviewed. As I've said before, I know [unclear] Morales, Elkin Montoya, Dalia Calvo, Anna Castro, and 20, or 40 other Hispanics that I have dealt with. I don't know if they will be interviewed, would like to be interviewed. There's only one way to find out.

P: Call them up.

M: That's right.

P: So where do you see yourself being in let's say another five years? Still here in Lowell here?

M: Still in Lowell with a successful business, and more involved in community work, and hopefully with a larger group of Hispanics organized, and sharing with the community what I have taken.

P: Do you see any tensions occurring between the Greek and the Spanish worlds?

M: In what sense?

P: Either, mainly you know, in the city, or even within your own life? I know that this can be a personal question.

M: No, not that I know.

P: Because you do have two strong trends in your life.

M: Myself, personally?

P: Yourself, from your (--)

M: Yes, I participate in Greek events and I lend myself as much as I can to them because of my wife and my son. I like my children to see the two worlds, and learn from the two of them.

P: But couldn't he possibly experience some prejudice along the way?

M: Everybody experiences prejudice. Do you think the Hispanics say: "Oh, I love the Irish," or "the Americans, I love them." The Hispanics say the Gringo, you know. They are discriminating against them. They call them names. Just like the others call everybody else names. Even, I grew up in Mexico, the light-skinned children at school called me Indian. Isn't that discrimination, or prejudice? I believe that is discrimination or prejudice, but I think (--)

Tape I, side B ends

Tape II, side A

M: The Anglo itself, going to school, there are two or three children who does lower than the others, or has a crooked eye, or is handicapped. Isn't that guy, person discriminated against, or prejudiced against? Yes, we live in that world. And the sooner we learn to live with it, the happier we are going to be. What difference does it make if somebody calls me black, Puerto Rican, Indian, Mexican, Hispanic. I know who I am, and I have proven myself. I have succeeded within my own limitations, and I expect to succeed more. There are (--) Every group is discriminated against the other group, and prejudiced against the other group. I don't know if white, or dark, light-skinned person would like to see his children married to a Mexican dark-skinned, or to a black. But do we care? No. I don't think that is an important factor in anybody's life. I think the younger will marry whoever they please, even if the parents do not like it.

P: How about your own parents? Did they mind? You don't know?

M: When I reached the age of twenty-one we became friends. I became friends with my parents, and we always you know, talked things over as friends. They adjust to the modern world. They were living in the city, instead of a small town. We were having a cigarette in front of them; having a drink in front of them. Something that the previous generation, or a few years earlier wasn't heard of in the (--) I'm not talking about the high class group. I'm talking about the other groups other than high class, or high society.

P: Well I think I have exhausted all the questions for today, but I like the interview. If there are any other questions you know, that you might have or that I might have, I hope that you feel free to call.

M: Okay. I'll do that.

P: Okay, well thank you.

M: You're welcome

Interview Ends